

# Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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I N S I D E

# Local



## GRAND OPENING

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WDI Corp. officials and ranking Commonwealth government executives led by Gov. Juan N. Babauta, third from right, cut the ribbon for the official opening of the Tony Roma's and Capricciosa restaurants in Garapan Saturday night. From left are Darren Talai, vice president of operations; Ken Myres, vice president of Tony Roma's franchise division; Yoji Shimizu, WDI Corp. chairman of the board; Keiko Honda, Capricciosa founder; Robert H. Jones, Triple J and WDI Saipan president; Babauta; Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente; and Mitsuru Kuroda, president of WDI International.

## Airport revenue up by 9 percent at \$2.9M

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO  
REPORTER

The fiscal year's first quarter indicators show positive growth in the tourist industry, boosting optimism within the Commonwealth Ports Authority that the tourism industry will rebound this year.

CPA executive director Carlos H. Salas said the ports

authority saw a slight jump in enplanement and deplanement activities at the Saipan International Airport after two years of stagnant growth.

"We are upbeat that traffic at the Saipan International Airport would rebound this year. This gives us extra room to meet our obligations," Salas said in an interview.

Based on the Airport Statistical Highlights released by the CPA, enplanement activities for the first quarter of fiscal year 2004 posted a 5-percent increase compared with last year's 49,791 passengers. Traffic haul at the Saipan Airport also increased by 53 percent compared with the first quarter of FY01.

Also, the airport division



Salas

reported that deplanement at the SIA grew by 5 percent during the period under review compared

with 2003, and 53 percent compared with FY01's first quarter.

According to Salas, landings at the Saipan airport during the first quarter of FY04 also increased by 16 percent compared with 2003's first quarter but declined by 1 percent when compared with the first quarter of FY01.

As a result, the executive director said, airport revenues for the first quarter increased by 9 percent during the first quarter of the fiscal year and 7 percent during compared with the first quarter of FY01.

Records show that Saipan International Airport generated \$2,944,480 in revenue during the first quarter of FY04 compared with \$2,743,498 and \$2,022,143 of the first quarter of fiscal years 2003 and 2001, respectively.

"We are confident that tourist traffic this fiscal year would be better than the two prior years; hopefully, nothing major would happen that would impact again on the tourism industry," said Salas.

From 2001 to 2003, the tourism industry had tried to ward off the negative impacts of the severe acute respiratory syndrome, the war in Iraq, and the continued effects of the 9/11 terror attacks.

Despite these early positive indicators, the CPA disclosed that massive restructuring of priorities would still be undertaken to ensure that the ports authority meets its obligations and proceed with improvement projects at the three CNMI airports.



## Healthy living presentations set

Did you know that diabetes is a dangerous disease that can cause death? Are you suffering from diabetes or do you want to prevent yourself and your family from getting diabetes?

We care for your health. Please come and join us on Sunday, Feb. 8, 9am, at the PIC Napu Room for presentations on living healthy.

The CNMI Diabetes Prevention and Control Program and NMC-CREES will be providing:

- Free diabetes screening
- Free education for a healthier diet
- Free education for diabetes control
- A Certificate of Participation from the Department of Public Health

This event is sponsored and organized by the Bangladesh Society of the CNMI.

## Sinapalo Elementary School PTA meeting

The monthly PTA meeting at Sinapalo Elementary School will be on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 5:30pm.

All parent and legal guardians whose children go to Sinapalo Elementary are invited to attend this meeting. For more information, contact school principal Carmen H. Atalig at 532-9521.

## Victim hotline volunteers sought

Do you want to make a difference? Do you want to help our community? Are you interested in issues such as domestic violence, child physical and sexual abuse, rape, or suicide?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then you may be the right kind of person to become a Victim Hotline Volunteer. The Victim Hotline is a 24/7 telephone crisis intervention hotline that provides access to information, referral, and a listening ear to victims of crimes in the Northern Marianas.

Interested individuals may contact Velma Del Rosario at 234-5100 to reserve slots as they are limited to only 30 individuals.

## Military ID cardholders survey on

The Office of Military/Veterans Affairs is conducting a survey on all military ID cardholders, whose ID cards are expiring within the next six months and are in need of assistance. Please call 664-2650 for more information. There is a big change in obtaining and renewing procedures.

## Public library to close periodically

Joeten-Kiyu Public Library is having new air conditioning units installed and would like to inform the public that the library will be closing periodically until the work is completed. The first closure was yesterday. Additional closing dates will follow.

"We will make every effort to inform the public ahead of time, however, we encourage the public to call 235-7322/3 before visiting the library or for more information on closing dates. We apologize for any inconvenience as work is being done to improve the library facility," the library administration said in a media statement.

## Veterans of Saipan, Tinian battles sought

Veterans of the World War II battles of Saipan and Tinian will be invited to the commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Battle for Saipan and Tinian to be held June 12-16, 2004 on Saipan.

The Committee for the Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of WWII is soliciting help from newspapers, churches, state and local chapters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Veterans Associations, non-profit organizations, and family members to help identify veterans to be recognized.

Anyone who knows a veteran involved in these battles should send their name and contact information to Jessica Jordan at marianas04-anniversary@yahoo.com, or call (670) 234-7212; fax: (670) 234-7211, or mail: PMB 409 Box 10000 Saipan MP 96950.

## ASVAB examination set

Attention to individuals 17-34 years old who want to join the U.S. Army.

The U.S. Army Reserve Center in Puerto Rico will be conducting the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery examination on Feb. 27-28.

On Feb. 27, the exam will be conducted at 4:30pm. The next day, Feb. 28, the exam will be held at 12:30pm.

"Please sign in early for the test at the US Army Reserve Center, Puerto Rico 'The Base' or call 322-6680 and ask for SSG Roberts or Mr. Quitugua," the statement said.

For more information, call SFC Abadam or SGT Benavente collect at (671) 477-7330/7666.

WDI-JVA



# Municipal councils push for empowerment

The 3rd Association of Municipal Councils Inc. recently adjourned its second regular session held on Tinian with a plea to the Legislature to approve two initiatives that would confer more power on the CNMI's municipal councils.

In the opening session, Tinian senator and outgoing association president Henry H. San Nicolas assured the members of his continued support to grant the municipal councils on Rota, Tinian/Aguiguan, and Saipan/Northern Islands legislative authority to enact local laws on local matters in their respective senatorial districts.

Speaking for Tinian Mayor Francisco M. Borja, San Nicolas welcomed and thanked the association for choosing Tinian to hold its second regular session.

Association president Gregorio V. Deleon Guerrero spoke about the need to work hand in hand to empower the municipal councils.

The association unanimously adopted the two proposed initiatives amending Article II, Section 6, and Article VI of the NMI Constitution to grant the mayor and members of the municipal councils in their respective senatorial districts power to control local matters through the enactment of local laws.

According to Deleon Guerrero, the time has come to fulfill the intents and purposes in creating the offices of the mayors and municipal councils, saying the mayors and the municipal councils members were elected to represent and serve the people at the municipal level.

He noted that while the mayors and the members of the municipal councils may have exclusive legislative authority on local matters under the initiatives, nothing can prevent the Legislature from repealing local laws and reenacting them into Commonwealth laws.

Deleon Guerrero urged the members of the Legislature to pass the initiatives to enable the voters to participate in the decision making process to either ratify or reject them.

The session was held on Feb. 6-7. The association unanimously voted to hold its third regular session in March on Rota.

Besides Deleon Guerrero, others present during the session were vice president Jude U. Hofschneider, secretary Mametto M. Ayuyu, treasurer Antonia M. Tudela, members Alexander A. Apatang, Tom Glenn A. Quitugua, Edwin P. Aldan and David A. Indalecio.

# House honors THC exec Jerry Tan

The House of Representatives adopted a resolution honoring 2003 Business Person of the Year Jerry Tan for having landed the prestigious award conferred by the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Members adopted House Resolution 14-16, offered by Vice Speaker Timothy P. Villagomez, during a session on Friday.

The lower house lauded the executive vice president of the Tan Holdings Corp. not only for his noteworthy business accomplishments but also for his commitment to civic-oriented endeavors.

The House commended Tan for his active involvement in community service.

The honoree is not only executive VP of THC—a diverse holding company that conducts business in 14 industries in the Western Pacific—but also VP and director of the Asia Pacific Hotels, which owns the Dai-Ichi Hotel-Saipan and Guam Dai-Ichi Hotel.

He is also director of global conglomerate Luen Thai Group, which specializes in apparel manufacturing, logistics services, and software development.

The awardee also holds the position of president and chief executive officer of the CTSI Logistics Group, a company founded on Saipan, which now has offices in 19 countries.

Among others, he serves as president of the Tan Holdings Foundation, director of the NMI Chapter of the American Red Cross and co-chairman of the 2003 Club 200 fundraising event, and president of the Northern Marianas College Foundation.

The sports enthusiast is also the president of the Saipan Bowling Association. *(Marian A. Maraya)*



Tan

# HUD wants voucher reforms

In its fiscal year 2005 budget, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has proposed to Congress sweeping reform in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, also known as Section 8 assistance.

The Flexible Voucher Program reforms are designed to help public housing authorities such as the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. transition more low-income families through the program to self-sufficiency, reducing the number of families on long waiting lists around the country.

HUD is proposing a new dollar-based grant program that will better manage costs, continue to serve at least 1.9 million families or more and provide the PHAs a more efficient and effective program.


HUD's current system serves 1.9 million families. However, there are no incentives for families to move off the program to self-sufficiency. FVP will serve at least 1.9 million families or more, and provides incentives to PHAs to help more families achieve self-sufficiency.

WEATHER FORECAST




PICTURE TIME: 2:25 A.M., DECEMBER 17, 2003  
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.


A monsoon trough extends from 6N130E through a tropical disturbance near 8N145E and finally to near 5N160E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the disturbance are found in the Mariana islands as well as between Yap and Chuuk or between 4N and 16N from 139E to 153E. Just east of the monsoon trough, a surface trough of low pressure continues to near the equator at 168E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are developing north and east of the trough or within 100 miles either side of a line from 9N160E to the equator at 173E, including Kosrae. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms across portions of the Marshall islands, between 4N and 16N from 170E to 180.




**SAIPAN AND TINIAN**  
Cloudy and breezy with scattered showers, some locally heavy, and a slight chance of thunderstorms.  
**Winds:** East at 20-25 mph. Gusting in 35 mph in showers.  
**Temperature:** Lows near 78. Highs near 86.




**GUAM AND ROTA**  
Cloudy and breezy with scattered showers, some locally heavy, and a slight chance of thunderstorms.  
**Winds:** East at 20-25 mph. Gusting in 35 mph in showers.  
**Temperature:** Lows near 78. Highs near 86.




**PALAU**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 10 kt.




**POHNPEI**  
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** East at 10 kt.




**YAP AND ULITHI**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 10 kt.






















**KOSRAE**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Southeast at 10 kt.



**CHUUK**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers with a slight chance of thunderstorms.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 10-15 kt.



**MAJURO**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.  
**Winds:** East at 10-15 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
 Auckland	Cloudy	61F (16C)	49F (9C)
 Beijing	Sunny	44F (7C)	26F (-3C)
 Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	74F (23C)	61F (16C)
 Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	86F (30C)	72F (22C)
 London, England	Cloudy	56F (13C)	45F (7C)
 Los Angeles	Cloudy	69F (21C)	51F (11C)
 Manila	Cloudy	88F (31C)	71F (22C)
 Melbourne	Sunny	73F (23C)	54F (12C)
 Miami	Partly Cloudy	84F (29C)	75F (24C)
 New York, NY	Cloudy	52F (11C)	48F (9C)
 Osaka	Rain	54F (12C)	46F (8C)
 Paris	Cloudy	53F (12C)	41F (5C)
 Pusan	Rain	58F (14C)	43F (6C)
 Rome	Partly Cloudy	55F (13C)	39F (4C)
 Salem, Oregon	Rain	54F (12C)	38F (3C)
 San Francisco	Sunny	64F (18C)	47F (5C)
 Seoul	Rain	52F (11C)	45F (7C)
 Tokyo	Rain	55F (13C)	49F (9C)
 Washington, DC	Cloudy	60F (16C)	48F (9C)

# Guerrero: Yangetmai has the right to question Teacher Rep poll result

Board of Education member Herman Guerrero commented yesterday that Marianas High School teacher James Yangetmai has the prerogative to question the results of the recently concluded Teacher Representative election, which the Association of Commonwealth Teacher candidate lost to Kagman High School teacher



Guerrero

Ambrose Bennett. “Anyone [who] is running can always question [the election result]. I think they [administration] need to ensure whether he has valid points or not. If it’s not valid, then at least you settle the issue. And there’s no cloud hanging over the whole process. “It’s a democratic process. People who lose sometimes ask or think there are discrepancies or procedures [that were] not followed. If that is the case then the people that are conducting the election needs to refute them and say that this is what we did, and this the process and the procedures,” said the official, who recently lost the BOE chairmanship to Roman Benavente. Yangetmai, who lagged behind Bennett by 16 votes in Monday’s poll, hinted of possible vote manipulation, casting

doubts on the election’s credibility. ACT claimed the process was not valid and fair, as it allegedly lacked transparency. The group raised the absence of its own representative at the polling center. “I guess in any election, there’s a need to be clear on the process and procedures. If the one who lost is questioning the validity of the election then perhaps they need to revisit [the issue] and make sure there’s no doubt that what they certified is true and correct. The process has to be followed and it has to be transparent so nobody can question it,” insisted Guerrero, who called on House legislators yesterday. The BOE member representing Saipan was also curious over the dismal turnout in Monday’s election.

“When you only have 28 percent [of] eligible voters voting, that’s an extremely low turnout. With this kind of turnout, there’s no clear mandate from the teachers. So it’s questionable. One can raise the question why you don’t have many who voted? There’s a lot of questions why,” he asserted. Gov. Juan N. Babauta proclaimed Bennett’s victory on Tuesday, a day after the Teacher Representative poll was held here Monday and simultaneously on Rota and Tinian. The chief executive stressed that teacher representation in the BOE is constitutionally mandated. He said that concerns raised over the selection has prompted his office to hold the election so that all public school teachers in the CNMI could choose a representative that would truly represent them.

Babauta credited the Public School System, the BOE, the

PSS legal counsel, the Attorney General’s Office and the administration for putting together a fair and objective selection process. Of the 500 full-time teachers who were eligible to vote, Babauta confirmed that only 142 teachers or 28 percent cast their votes. He lamented the minimal participation. According to the breakdown, Yangetmai garnered 62 votes while Bennett gained 78 votes. Two ballots were reportedly cast without votes. Babauta explained that only full time teachers were eligible to vote in this election, quoting PSS’ definition of full time teachers as any person who is employed by the Public School System and has the primary responsibility for the education, instruction or provides related services for one or more students. *(Marian A. Maraya)*

# Paras signs payment schedule with CHC

By LIBERTY DONES  
REPORTER

Paras Enterprises president Juan T. Guerrero has signed a payment schedule agreement with the Department of Public Health only last week. Earlier, Paras legal counsel Mark Smith clarified that no agreement had been reached yet as of Jan. 8 as previously agreed by both parties. Guerrero said yesterday that Paras signed the payment schedule only last Jan. 14. On January 16, he said Paras received an additional \$100,000 payment from DPH. Based on the schedule, the department will give another payment of \$80,000 to Paras on Jan. 30 and some \$50,000 on Feb. 13. Guerrero said Paras and DPH continue to negotiate for the \$50,000 billing. “We have submitted our billing for \$50,000. I don’t know why they’re disputing our billing now when in the last six years,

they never did,” said Guerrero. He said Paras submitted \$248,000 billing to DPH as of Jan. 7, 2004. Based on the schedule, the DPH only acknowledged some \$230,000. “There is some flexibility but we’ll still pursue what is really due us,” said Guerrero, adding that the department itself is charging Paras some \$11,000 for outstanding hospital bills. This amount would be assessed against the last payment to Paras. “We’ll settle that but I’m not really sure how much we owe them so we have to discuss that,” he said. Guerrero also clarified that he has not signed any expiration transfer agreement with the department, which would “legalize” the transfer of Paras employees to the Commonwealth Health Center. Some authorities, however, said that a consensual transfer agreement with Paras is no longer needed

since its contracts with employees provide that their termination of employment goes with Paras’ contract termination with CHC. Both parties have agreed to finalize their payment schedule in view of the DPH’ shift to direct hiring of nursing staff effective Jan. 1, 2004. Paras and other agencies’ contracts with CHC ended on Dec. 31, 2003 but transfer negotiations dragged along pending the settlement of the government’s debt with the companies and the lack of funded FTEs or positions at the department. On Jan. 2, Finance released \$100,000 each to Paras and Saipan Employment Agency Services as partial payment. The government terminated its contracts with agencies on the belief that direct hiring would result in better delivery of health care and boost employee morale. The direct hiring aims to implement a uniform pay for all nursing staff.

# DEQ heightens illegal dumping campaign

The Division of Environmental Quality warned that it would impose a fine on anyone caught illegally dumping trash on the islands. DEQ director John I. Castro Jr. urged the public to respect the no littering signs the agency has installed at beach parks and other areas. “We will assess a fine. Our regulations allow us to impose up to \$25,000 per day of violation,” Castro said. The DEQ hopes that the move will deter the public from illegally disposing of trash and household wastes. Castro said trash should be disposed of at the Lower Base

Refuse Transfer Station or the Marpi landfill. “Help us. It’s not just the DEQ’s job to keep Saipan beautiful but it’s also the public’s responsibility,” Castro added. The Environmental Inter-agency Cleanup Operation Team, of which DEQ is a member, and volunteers from non-profit group MOVER recently conducted an emergency cleanup in Garapan’s Makaka beach site, which had deteriorated due to illegal dumping. According to EICOT chairman Benny Pangelinan, people just ignored the DEQ’s no-littering sign at the site. *(John Ravelo)*

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# Opinion

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# EDITORIAL







### 3 men arrested for alleged assault

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO  
REPORTER

Authorities arrested Monday night three men who have been a subject of intensive investigations by law enforcers since November 2003 when a 43-year-old man lodged a complaint against them.

Police department spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas Jr. said Martin F. Borja, 38; Chris W. Taimanglo, 20; and William M. Faisao, 19, were arrested based on the arrest warrants issued against them by Judge Juan Lizama.

Blas said COPPS officers Jesse Seman and Sandy Hambros arrested the three suspects in connection with a Nov. 16, 2003, assault case lodged by Saburo Stewart, 43.

Lizama issued the warrants after the police released the results of its investigation on the case. The officers immediately served the warrants to the suspects. All three were brought to the Adult Correctional facility in Susupe where they were booked and detained pending bail hearing.

The investigation report showed that the police department received a call for assistance around 1:28am of Nov. 16, 2003, due to a disturbance in the house of Stewart in Kagman III area. Medics were also dispatched due to injuries sustained by the victim.

According to the report, the victim and two of the three suspects were involved in a fight outside the victim's house. During the squabble, the suspects used rocks, a machete, and a baseball bat to allegedly attack the victim, causing serious injuries.

Stewart reportedly sustained lacerations on the back, legs, and arms, as well as other cuts and bruises on his body.

After the investigation, probers determined the culpability of the three suspects and asked that arrest warrants be issued against them.

The suspects are now facing disturbing the peace, assault and battery, assault with dangerous weapons, and criminal mischief charges.

### Taiwanese boat seized off New Caledonia

A Taiwanese fishing boat has been intercepted south of New Caledonia for fishing illegally.

The French high commission in the New Caledonia capitol of Noumea says the ship had been spotted by a French surveillance aircraft and an inspection showed it carried dozens of tons of fresh and frozen fish.

The interception comes just days after the captain of another Taiwanese fishing boat was jailed for six months and fined almost US\$200,000 for fishing illegally. (RNZI/PIR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

#### EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION

Saipan Southern High School students gather around Gov. Juan N. Babauta during the chief executive's recent visit at the campus, in line with the administration's education program. Babauta has been putting emphasis on public education as an important tool in the eventual recovery of the local economy.

## MPLA board in limbo due to lack of quorum

By LIBERTY DONES  
REPORTER

The lack of a quorum on the Board of Directors of the Marianas Public Lands Authority is stymieing efforts to move ahead on critical projects, including 36 new offers for land compensation that require the board's approval.

Only two members remain on the Board—chairperson, Ana Demapan-Castro and vice chairman Manny Villagomez—following the resignation of a member and term expiration of another.

Member Pedro M. Atalig resigned from the board effective Jan. 1, 2004, while member

Pedro Igitol's term expired on Dec. 31, 2003.

The board is composed of five seats, with one representative each from Tinian and Rota and three from Saipan. The CNMI Constitution also provides that one of the directors should be of Carolinian descent, while another should represent women.

At the moment, Demapan-Castro represents Saipan and the women's sector, while Villagomez represents Tinian. This means nobody is representing Rota, the Carolinians, and two seats for Saipan.

This, even as the MPLA has already readied 36 new offers for land compensation that re-

quire the board's approval.

"We have to get the board's approval before we can make the offer but the board can't possibly meet right now for lack of quorum," said MPLA commissioner Henry S. Hofschneider.

The board normally holds a regular meeting on the third Thursday of the month.

Hofschneider said that some names have been floated for appointment by the governor to the board. He declined to identify them.

Meantime, he said that 38 landowners have accepted the MPLA's initial offers and are like likely to get their compensation within the month.

"Once Finance puts the

money in MPLA's special account, we can start cutting checks," he said.

Hofschneider said that MPLA is offering "just and fair" compensation to landowners.

The MPLA board approved 75 folders for immediate land compensation last month. This came soon after the CNMI government floated a \$40-million bond, with the proceeds to be used primarily to settle the longstanding land claims by individuals against the government. The first batch of claims included acquisition of rights-of-way.

The Land Compensation Act mandates the government to prioritize the payment for lands used for rights-of-way,

then ponding basins, and later wetlands and other claims.

The payment to landowners is based on the valuation at the time of taking by the Commonwealth.

The MPLA has listed some 120 eligible land claimants in the CNMI.

Of the \$40-million bond, only about \$27 million will be used for land compensation, as \$11 million has been allotted to fund a pending prison project. The bond's Hawaii-based underwriter also deducted \$1.5 million from the total amount for cost of the bond issuance.

The government is given 30 years to pay off the loan at an annual interest of 6.75 percent.

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## Good Housekeeping

# Nails for a carpenter

By JEANNE MARIE LASKAS  
THE WASHINGTON POST

This all started a week ago. I called Dan, my contractor, to ask him a routine question about window casing options. He wasn't home, so I left a message.

Now, Dan isn't just any old contractor. Dan is a best-kept-secret master-carpenter/dream-contractor. He is a lone angel walking amid the darkness of contractors who promise and leave, promise and leave, never call, leave you with sewage gas leaking into your attic. He is the type you watch with utter amazement as he commits all of his energy and all of his devotion to the perfect patio door installation, and you think: I am never letting go of this man.

This happened last summer as Dan went about transforming my spider hole of a kitchen into a sparkling, sun-drenched food-prep heaven. "I will never let you go," I said to him, bribing him with steaks and drawings my girls made of "Uncle Dan." I asked him to

please take on the larger job of converting our confusing old farmhouse into one that at least makes a tiny bit of logical sense. To wit: one front door instead of five. He said he would. He spent several days just staring at my house. Staring and studying and trying to figure out what the heck happened over the past century as farmer after farmer added a porch, enclosed it, added a porch, enclosed it, as the house grew ever westward.

"This house," Dan would say. "This house!" But he never gave up. He began a master plan and suggested we divide the work into smaller projects that he could do over the next few years. He said he would "put me on the schedule."

The schedule? "I am a jealous woman," I said to him, explaining that I didn't want to be on a schedule. I wanted him all to myself.

"I know," he said. "I know." I learned of the other women. I learned of a previous customer who had recently moved away, and who now was prepared to

import Dan over two state lines. I learned of her friend, who had lured Dan with a two-story addition project.

"My house needs you more than their houses need you!" I pleaded.

"I know," he said. "I know." But he had committed to them. And he assured me he was committing to me. He said he was nothing if not a loyal man. And then he was gone, returning sporadically over these past months to go over plans. Sometimes Dan would bring along his kids, who like to play here, and his wife, Jennifer, a kind and strong soul. On my birthday last fall, my husband surprised me with the gift of Jennifer, who works as a manicurist: She sat under our maple tree and did my nails and my girls' nails, never once complaining as my 4-year-old requested a drawing on each fingernail, ending with a unicorn-above-rainbow on her left pinky.

This is probably not your average contractor-customer relationship. No, this has evolved into something far more elaborate.

So naturally I was surprised last week when Dan never returned my message. I called again. Jennifer answered. "Oh, you didn't hear," she said, with exhaustion in her voice. My heart sank. She told me Dan was on a roof, slipped on some ice, got a good sliding start, then sailed 17 feet down onto a slab of cement. He broke both elbows, a wrist, maybe a shoulder, his nose, who knows what else. "I'm so ... sorry," I said. "How can I help?"

"Win the lottery?" she said. "He needs a lot of surgeries."

He's self-employed. Like all those Americans you hear politicians debate about, he has no health insurance. He'll be out of work, and in and out of hospitals, for months. How does a family absorb such a blow? "I'm going to work really hard," Jennifer said, of the manicure business she runs out of her home. "I'm going to ... increase my client base."

Dan called me the day he got out of the hospital. His broken nose made his voice unrecognizable. "I'm sorry

I didn't call you back till now," he said, ridiculously.

"Look, I want to help," I said.

"I'm going to get better," he said. "Just believe in me. That's the most help."

That was too simple. I hung up, wondered what on earth I could do. I thought about getting a manicure, maybe a French manicure, or something really elaborate. When there is an important person in your life who is suddenly in need, you'll do anything to help, wondering how come everything you think of seems so puny.

A day later I got an e-mail. A woman who said she lives two states away. The other woman! She had tracked me down. And a few of the other women, too. "We're starting a fund," she wrote, asking me to participate. "Of course!" I said, got out my checkbook, and all day I walked around thinking about the way loyalty begets loyalty.

Tomorrow I'm taking my girls over, and anyone else I can enlist. We'll get manicures and pedicures, and buy gift certificates for friends.



## Fun with faucets: Look Ma, no hands

By JURA KONCIUS  
THE WASHINGTON POST

Hands-free faucets, a staple of restrooms in airports, movie theaters and other public places, are now trickling into the domestic market, particularly in powder rooms and children's bathrooms.

"Since the 1970s, these faucets have been used in commercial locations because of hygiene and ease of use," says Melissa Birdsong, director of trend

forecasting and design for Lowe's home improvement stores. "As people have become comfortable with the use of hands-free technology, they started asking for it for their homes."

Although hands-free faucets such as the e-Flow line from Delta must be special-ordered at Lowe's and sell for about \$250 and up, Birdsong says, sales are on the rise. Hands-free models have caught on not only because universal design is becoming more popular, but also because manufactur-

ers have improved the installation technology. Consumers can pre-set water temperatures (including a non-scalding feature) and stylish new models are more suitable for a family bathroom than a gas station restroom.

"Now these things have a cool factor," says Birdsong. "I think they're going to become very popular as the styling, ease of use and the price reach a point of acceptability."

What about those automatic toilets? She says no rush to hands-free flush.

## The latest portable desk set

By JURA KONCIUS  
THE WASHINGTON POST

Between cell phones, beepers and laptops, people seem to be taking their office wherever they go. A cool metal Fold-Away Desk by Russell+Hazel is equally portable. Or it can be bolted to the wall to keep supplies handy in a home office, kitchen or wherever you set up shop—open if you want to see it all, closed when you want to put work out of mind. The 15-by-20-inch industrial gray metal surface is magnetic so it can serve as a memo board when it's closed.

Christine Plantan, founder of the stylish Minneapolis office supply company Russell+Hazel, says she

first spotted an old version of the desk at an office supply surplus store. Turns out that model has been manufactured for years for use in factories to organize time cards next to time clocks and phones.

"We ordered some and hung them on walls all over our offices," says Plantan. "We discovered it's a great place to put a laptop, especially in apartments with no room for large desks." Plantan is planning to come out soon with Fold-Aways in different colors; wouldn't one look fab in pink?

Available at [www.russellandhazel.com](http://www.russellandhazel.com) for \$135, the desk comes equipped with cool supplies like polka dot Post-it Notes, correspondence cards, colorful magnets and pencils (888-254-5837).



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# Business

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# World

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## Across the Globe

## Security Council sets sanctions deadline

By EDITH M. LEDERER  
AP WRITER

**UNITED NATIONS (AP)**—The Security Council set a March 31 deadline Friday for nearly 100 countries to report on their enforcement of sanctions against al-Qaida and the Taliban—or be publicly named and shamed.

A resolution adopted unanimously gives the committee monitoring sanctions new powers to assess what states are doing to implement the asset freeze, travel ban, and arms embargo against the two groups and terror leader Osama bin Laden.

The council has been concerned that nearly 100 of the 191 U.N. member states have failed to submit reports on their actions to enforce sanctions.

The resolution sets a March 31 deadline for all countries that have not submitted reports to do so, or to explain

in writing their reasons for not responding. It asks the sanctions committee to give the council a list of countries that don't comply by that date.

Chile's U.N. Ambassador Heraldo Munoz, the committee chairman, told reporters after the vote that he will publicly identify countries that don't submit a report and say whether it's a lack of political will, because of technical problems, or for some other reason.

He said earlier this month that identifying the countries not complying would be more than a matter of "naming and shaming." The council must also close loopholes, adopt tougher measures, and stress to countries that enforcing sanctions is mandatory, he said.

"I think there's a strong message to countries to comply," said Munoz, who is also this month's Security Council president.

The resolution reiterates "the urgency for all states to comply with their existing obligations" to implement sanctions and to ensure that their domestic laws and administrative measures allow assets to be frozen, travel to be banned, and arms shipments to be halted.

It calls on states "to move vigorously and decisively to cut the flows of funds and other financial assets and economic resources to individuals and entities associated with the al-Qaida organization, Osama bin Laden and/or the Taliban."

This should be done by implementing internationally accepted standards for combating the financing of terrorism, including preventing the abuse of non-profit organizations, it said.

The Security Council shifted sanctions from the government of

Afghanistan to bin Laden, al-Qaida and remnants of the Taliban in January 2002, after a U.S.-led force ousted the Taliban.

U.N. sanctions require all nations to impose a travel ban and an arms embargo and freeze the assets of individuals and groups on a list issued by the sanctions committee.

While 4,000 individuals linked to al-Qaida and the Taliban have been detained in over 102 countries, the U.N. list of individuals and entities subject to sanctions has just 398 names.

The resolution urges all states to provide names for the list.

U.S. deputy ambassador James Cunningham said the resolution supports Munoz' efforts to improve the enforcement of sanctions.

"The original resolution set up a good set of measures," he said. "We

want to see if we can improve how those are implemented, and we'll then look whether there are further steps that we or others can propose to the council to strengthen the (sanctions) regime as a whole."

To assist the sanctions committee, the resolution establishes a New York-based monitoring team for 18 months. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is asked to consult with the committee and appoint eight members to the team with expertise ranging from financing terrorism to arms embargoes and the use of couriers and alternative remittance systems.

The resolution calls for the team to deliver its first report to the committee on implementation of sanctions by the 191 U.N. member states by July 31, its second by Dec. 15, 2005 and its third by June 30, 2005.

## Audit finds billions in China misused

**SHANGHAI, China (AP)**—Audits aimed at ferreting out corruption in China uncovered \$8 billion in misused or embezzled funds and widespread irregularities that produced "serious losses" of state assets, the government said Friday.

Auditors investigated 130,000 state businesses and offices last year as part of the communist leadership's campaign against the pervasive graft that has soured public faith in the government.

Li Jinhua, minister of the State Auditing Administration, told officials attending a national conference Friday that government auditors found larger-

than-reported losses in the accounts of the State Power Corp., the former national power monopoly that was dismantled last year.

Irregularities at the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China - one of the country's biggest state-owned banks—included housing and auto loans granted to organizations or individuals using false documents and excessive lending to local governments, Li said in an account posted on the audit office's Web site.

The bank suffered "serious losses" from illegal loans granted by staff and related companies, it said without giving figures. The report also cited a "big

batch" of major economic crimes but did not elaborate.

Li has long criticized officials for diverting government subsidies and spending lavishly on offices, private villas and stock speculation, among other abuses.

As a result of the audits, \$2.9 billion of the \$8 billion in misused funds were returned to the government, and the cases of 749 officials were referred to prosecutors for criminal investigations, the audit office said.

In recent months, thousands of Chinese officials and managers of state companies have been punished in a renewed effort to root out rampant abuse of power.

## Envoy hopeful about N. Korea talks

**BEIJING (AP)**—A top U.S. diplomat praised China on Friday for its efforts to reconvene negotiations about North Korea's nuclear program, expressing hope that a new round of six-party talks to resolve the dispute could be held without much further delay.

But after a day of meeting with Chinese leaders, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage wouldn't cite a potential date for the talks, saying only that Washington and Beijing expect they would be "soon."

The decision on when talks would be resumed "seems to lie in Pyongyang rather than Beijing," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Friday, referring to the North Korean government.

"We are working with our partners in these talks to try to prepare another round," Boucher said. But "sitting down at the table again requires the consent of Pyongyang."

The first round ended in August without a settlement or a date to meet

again. The talks involve the United States, China, Japan, Russia and the two Koreas.

An Australian government delegation was on its way to North Korea on Friday to persuade Pyongyang to agree to a second round, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said. Australia, a close U.S. ally, has diplomatic links with North Korea.

"A constructive, diplomatic solution to North Korea's nuclear crisis, which escalated just over a year ago, is vital for the security of our region and stability in North Asia and among our allies and top trading partners," said Downer, who was leading the delegation, which will be in Pyongyang until Tuesday.

The nuclear dispute flared in October 2002 when U.S. officials accused North Korea of running the uranium program in violation of a 1994 deal requiring the North to freeze its nuclear facilities. But North Korea has since denied ever having a uranium program.

## Official: Plane crashes off Nigeria coast

**LAGOS, Nigeria (AP)**—A 25- to 30-seat passenger plane plunged into the Atlantic Ocean off Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, on Friday, an airport official and witnesses said.

There was no sign of any survivors, victims or wreckage. It was unclear how many people were aboard the aircraft.

Air traffic control was trying to determine the origin of the plane, which disappeared beneath the waves, the official at Lagos international airport said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The plane went down along a

busy east-west commercial West African flight path that is also used by multinational oil companies to fly workers to and from facilities in Nigeria's oil delta. No airline reported any planes missing.

Police called for divers to search the seas for survivors, but those plans collapsed because for lack of diving equipment. Fishermen offered to help but later refused when they were told they would not be paid.

A witness, security supervisor Kelvin Ikpeme, said he saw a white,

yellow and blue twin-engine plane "shaking" and wobbling in the sky shortly before the crash.

"I rushed down here and saw smoke. Only the nose was still above the water," Ikpeme said.

The craft soon vanished off Lekki, a neighborhood on the eastern edge of Lagos, Ikpeme and other witnesses said.

A Lagos state official, Leke Pitan, said time had run out to find survivors.

"We're no longer thinking about a rescue. Now we're thinking about a recovery operation," Pitan said.

Bystanders run away as a police helicopter tries to land on a beach, near where a small plane crashed into the ocean, in Lagos, Nigeria, Friday Jan. 30, 2004.

AP







## Life &amp; Style

## Size matters in 'Littlest Groom'

By LYNN ELBER  
AP TELEVISION WRITER

Just as "The Station Agent" is painting movie screens with an emotionally rich, unhackneyed story about a dwarf, Fox escorts "The Littlest Groom" down the reality TV aisle.

Is the dating show with the saccharine title about a 4-foot-5 man wooing both small and average-size women a case of one step forward, two steps back?

No, said Glen Foster, the 23-year-old Philadelphia bachelor featured in the two-part special premiering Monday at 8 p.m. EST.

No, said Eric Schotz, the show's creator, whose other reality TV productions include "Man Vs. Beast" and "Boot Camp."

We'll see, said the Little People of America, an 8,000-member organization that provides support and information to the short-statured.

"We're mildly concerned," said LPA spokesman Dan Okenfuss. "But we remain neutral. We hope we can take (the producers) at their word and there is nothing exploitive or objectionable in relationship to the contestants."

The show's goal is an entertaining variation on the matchmaking genre, not a punchline, Schotz said. "We didn't

Mika, left, gets some help with her backswing from Glen in this scene from Fox's two-part special "The Littlest Groom," airing Monday, Feb. 16, 2004 and Monday, Feb. 23 at 8 p.m. EST.

AP

make a joke out of it. We didn't go, 'Ha, ha, you're short, this is a tall world.'"

In the first hour, Foster is presented with a group of 12 women, all little people, and goes through reality TV's freeze-dried version of courtship. A Malibu mansion is base camp; Dani Behr ("Boy Meets Boy") is the host.

After contestant eliminations, women of average height join the fray.

"Ultimately, he will have to make a final decision ... Will Glen decide that 'good things come in small packages'? Or that 'opposites attract'?" Fox teases in its program description.

While there'll be no cash prize for the happy couple, they'll have each other - plus an all-expenses-paid vacation to get to know each other better.

"It's a twist, because (the genre) is by its nature competitive," Schotz said. "But it's not out of the realm of the world that they (little people) work in and play in. Average-sized women play a role in their lives."

Foster, who has dated both short and tall women, said he felt entirely comfortable with the project and his treatment.

"I did not feel exploited whatsoever. We were put in the best light we could possibly be in," he said. The program offers "a chance to look thorough the eyes of a little person and see what it's like."

Little People of America was among those contacted by the producers of "The Littlest Groom" for pointers.

"They spoke with us, told us the premise, asked questions on how little people prefer to be treated and prefer to

be identified," Okenfuss said.

The group has no objections to the show's concept or its inclusion of both little and average-size women in the dating pool, he said. He brushed away the annoyance of the condescending title.

"Believe me, we've heard every single pun out there dealing with stature," Okenfuss said.

Members, however, were expressing skepticism about the show itself, which was in post-production the week before it aired. Preview copies were unavailable.

"Fox has a reputation of airing some programs that push the edge, so we remain cautious about how the show will be executed," Okenfuss said. He and others in the group planned to watch it.

Schotz's inspiration came from a segment of "Man Vs. Beast" in which 40 little people were pitted against an elephant in a jetliner-pulling contest. (A sequel, "Man Vs. Beast 2," airs Feb. 20 on Fox).

During production, he recalled, "Everyone was obsessed with the little people, not staring and gawking but hanging with them. ... You find there's some very cool people."

In "Man Vs. Beast," the elephant won. Will little people be winners with "The Littlest Groom"?

"The show's compelling. The groom, Glen, is unbelievable. He's a great, great guy," Schotz said. "I think you'll watch this one with a gigantic smile on your face. It's one where the producers didn't take the cheap shot."

## Oscar fashions previewed on runway

The latest fashions from Christian Dior, Richard Tyler, Halston and other top designers were on the runway at the 76th annual Academy Awards Fashion Preview show.

"Inside the theater, the evening is all about film. But on the red carpet, it's the look that counts," Oscar fashion coordinator Patty Fox said in a statement Thursday.

Fox said the Oscar red carpet has become the largest fashion show in the world, with each gown an individual work of art.

The preview included a platinum jeweled gown by Tyler, a black vintage lace gown by Gianfranco Ferre and a black beaded Tiffany gown designed by Valentino. The Valentino gown was accessorized with a 55-carat diamond chain necklace by Fred Leighton and black "meteoric" sandals by Stuart Weitzman.

The Oscars will be presented Feb. 29 at Hollywood's Kodak Theatre and televised on ABC. (AP)



AP

Ganna, far right, wears a Fred Leighton 19th century diamond cuff with her black vintage lace gown by Gianfranco Ferre as she poses with other models and Oscar fashion coordinator Patty Fox, far right, during the 76th annual Academy Awards Fashion Preview runway show Thursday, Feb. 12, 2004, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

## Dixie Chick Natalie Maines expecting

Dixie Chick Natalie Maines is expecting her second child.

Maines, 29, who sings and plays guitar, posted the news on the group's Web site. Maines and her husband, actor Adrian Pasdar, are "ecstatic about the news."

The couple, who were married in 2000, have a 2-year-old son, Jackson Slade Pasdar.

Maines didn't announce a due date. "Can you imagine the next tour for us? Five kids (or more) back stage?"

Oh, the THOUGHT is just exhausting," the Web site said.

Martie Maguire, the fiddle and mandolin player in the group, announced in November she is expecting twins. The third Chick, Emily Robison, has a 1-year-old son.

The performers said they were looking "forward to a year of healthy babies and further musical inspiration."

The Dixie Chicks' hits include "Landslide," "Ready to Run" and "Wide Open Spaces." (AP)

## Al Green inducted into Gospel Hall of Fame

Al Green and Sandi Patty led a diverse quartet of industry veterans inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame.

"We always want to honor the spectrum of music that has the gospel in it," said Gospel Music Association President John Styll. "For us, it's not about the style, it's about the message, and it's a way of showing that the gospel can be packaged in any number of ways."



Green

Also inducted were Vestal Goodman, who died in December of flu complications, and BMI President Frances W. Preston.

The ceremony was taped Wednesday for broadcast later in the year on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, the first time the induction ceremony will be televised.

"By making it a television special, our goal was to raise the level of recognition

and honor these folks get because they deserve it," Styll said.

In his speech, Green said he wasn't recognized by the Grammy Awards community until he made a gospel record. "I made records and records and records and didn't win a one. I come to Nashville, cut a gospel record, and they give me two," he said.

Patty, the all-time Dove Award leader among female artists with 39, said she appreciates the growth and diversity of gospel music.



# Judge wants Jackson case heard this year

By LINDA DEUTSCH  
AP SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The judge in Michael Jackson's child-molestation case said Friday he wants the trial to take place this year, and lawyers predicted they would be ready to go in December.

As expected, Jackson was not in court for the proceedings, and the atmosphere was much more subdued than his arraignment last month, when thousands of fans came to the courthouse and the 45-year-old pop star danced on top of his SUV.

This time, the seats reserved for his family in the courtroom were not filled. A contingent of Jackson fans sat in two rows but were told to button their jackets and hide T-shirts bearing slogans supporting the entertainer. Outside, a woman held a sign supporting the alleged victim.

Superior Court Judge Rodney Melville agreed to delay setting a date for a preliminary hearing until April 2. A preliminary hearing functions as a mini-trial at which the prosecution lays out its evidence and the judge decides if there is enough evidence to take the case to trial.

Defense attorney Mark Geragos said he had just received 400 pages of evidence from District Attorney Thomas Sneddon and needed time to review it.

Another Jackson attorney,



Lisa Dawn of Santa Rosa, Calif., shows her support for Michael Jackson outside at the courthouse in Santa Maria, Calif., where a hearing was scheduled Friday, Feb. 13, 2004.

Benjamin Brafman, also hinted there would be a need for hearings on "other serious issues" before the preliminary hearing. He did not elaborate.

Jackson is charged with committing lewd or lascivious acts with a child under 14 and giving the child an "intoxicating agent" - reportedly, wine.

The defense attorneys again implored the judge to give them an exception to a gag order to allow them to respond to inaccurate news reports.

"If one can believe the media, I've been fired and rehired five times since we were last here," Geragos said. He also said potential witnesses were leaking information.

"We do not want in any way, shape or form to violate the gag order. But when it has to do with a client, when people are polluting the jury pool, we should be able to say something," Geragos said.

The judge made no ruling but gave the attorneys time to file further suggestions on the matter.

Melville also took up a media request to unseal documents related to all searches in the case. He said the documents will remain sealed but he will release edited versions, possibly by next week, of all but two searches.

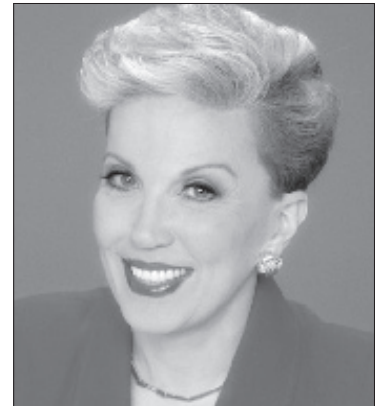
Only about two dozen fans showed up at the courthouse. One man with an umbrella danced atop a car, mimicking Jackson's January antics.

## Teen should take long look before leaping out of closet

By AVIGAIL VAN BUREN

**DEAR ABBY:** I am 16 years old and have been dating "Nora" for about six months. I love her, but I can't continue dating her because I recently realized I am more attracted to guys. We've been having sex for a little while, and I know Nora will be brokenhearted if I break up with her. But I am living a lie. How do I tell her?

LIVING A LIE



*Dear Abby*

**DEAR LIVING:** Before making any announcements, I urge you to think carefully about the implications. If you tell Nora, there is a strong possibility that she will tell others. How do your parents feel about gays? How do your friends at school regard homosexuality?

As much as you may care for Nora, unless you are ready to be completely "out," it might be safer for you to allow the relationship to taper off. If she insists on a reason, tell her you are not ready for a serious commitment. It would be kinder than letting her think she doesn't measure up.

**DEAR ABBY:** I've done something I'm ashamed of, and I have no way to apologize other than to hope the person I offended may see this.

On Christmas Eve, I was stuck in traffic and a woman with a carload of kids pushed into the intersection so far that I had no choice but to let her pass. She waved and I made a vulgar gesture.

I am over 50, well-educated, have good common sense and should know better. The look of horror and hurt on that woman's face was devastating. My grown daughter was in the car with me! I let her down, and I let myself down.

I apologized to my daughter, but she will never forget that stupid act. I wish there were some way to change what I did. If the woman who was in that car reads this, I hope she knows that I am sorry I ruined her Christmas spirit. It is all I have been able to think about since that night. Please forgive me.

ASHAMED IN MIDLOTHIAN, VA.

**DEAR ASHAMED:** I'm printing your letter for all to see. Sad to say, I'm sure many people will think the letter is intended for them.

**P.S. Contrition is a first step toward growth. Forgive yourself for your silly burst of temper and promise to behave better in the future.**

**DEAR ABBY:** Last March I had emergency surgery and was in the hospital for almost a month. It took me five months to fully recover. My family was wonderful. They sent gifts, called frequently and visited me. Their support helped to speed my recovery, and I returned to work and school sooner than expected.

The anniversary of my surgery is coming up, and I am planning a celebration to thank everyone for their generosity. I want to make sure no one brings a gift and they know the party is for them. What would be the appropriate wording for the invitation?

CELEBRATING IN OHIO

**DEAR CELEBRATING:** When you extend the invitation, make no reference to the fact that it is for anything other than "a dinner party." When your guests have assembled, break out the champagne, make a toast in their honor—before you all get toasted—and tell them the party is for them.

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

*For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)*

## Sharon Osbourne's sad talk show canceled

Sharon Osbourne says she's disappointed her talk show was canceled and would like to host another program with her husband, rocker Ozzy Osbourne.

"I've had a complete blast doing it. I'm sorry that it had to go this way," she said Thursday on CNN's "Larry King Live."

"The Sharon Osbourne Show" was a recently canceled because of low ratings, she said. She will shoot the program until May.

"I love doing TV," she added. "And for me to say, 'No, I never want to do it again,' I'd be a liar. Of course, I do. But I would ... feel better doing it with my husband."

Osbourne said she was unsure about returning to the show after her husband was injured in an all-terrain vehicle accident in England last year. But she was encouraged to come back, she said.

She added that her husband has little movement in his arm following the accident but will recover. (AP)



Osbourne

## Black Eyed Peas perform in Hanoi

By TINI TRAN  
AP WRITER

The red-velvet formality of Hanoi's Opera House took on a different groove for a night, becoming the backdrop for the rousing beats and catchy rhymes of the Black Eyed Peas.

The rap band—whose song "Where Is the Love?" was nominated for a Grammy Award—was in town Thursday to promote Vietnam's first large-scale international concert and awards show, to be held in Hanoi on June 26.

They performed at a news conference, and afterward signed autographs and posed for

pictures. Around midnight, they arrived at the ornate, French colonial-era Opera House to shoot a music video against its red-velvet curtains.

Under the glare of cameras and spotlights, they strutted, sang and danced their way through several songs, including "Where Is the Love?"

Tuxedoed members of the Vietnamese National Orchestra shared the stage, providing instrumental backup. The energetic performance brought the audience of several hundred people to their feet, waving their arms in the air and swaying to the beat.

## NBC to air documentary on Diana

NBC has acquired audiotapes made by Princess Diana talking about her life and will air them in a two-part documentary that will be telecast next month.

The never-before-broadcast tapes were made inside London's Kensington Palace and were used by Andrew Morton to write his book "Diana: Her True Story in Her Own Words."

NBC will supplement the tapes with video footage of Diana and interviews with some of her closest friends, some of whom are speaking for the first time about her life and death, the network said Friday.

The documentary will air on consecutive Thursdays, March 4 and 11, at 10 p.m. ET. (AP)





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# LeBron, Carmelo light up Rookie Challenge

By GREG BEACHAM  
AP SPORTS WRITER

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Though the future seems limitless for LeBron James and Carmelo Anthony, the teenage friends realize they'll only get rare chances to play together. The Rookie Challenge was one of those opportunities — and nobody in attendance will soon forget how LeBron and 'Melo seized the day.

James scored 33 points and hooked up with Anthony for four breathtaking alley-oop dunks that were the best moments in the sophomores' highlight-filled 142-118 victory Friday night.

Though neither player was selected for Sunday's All-Star game, James and Anthony are arguably the NBA's most anticipated rookie duo since Magic Johnson and Larry Bird — and in a game mercifully free of defense, they put on a show worthy of the hype.

"It was great to be out there with a good friend," James said.

"I feel good just being out there with LeBron," Anthony said. "It's really special."

In their only competition of the weekend — unless James changes his mind and accepts a spot in Saturday's dunk contest — the 19-year-old prodigies were the main attractions on a rookie team going against a squad of second-year pros led by Yao Ming and MVP Amare Stoudemire, who had 36 points and 11 rebounds.

James' pairing with Anthony was so enticing that the NBA moved the game from its usual spot in All-Star Saturday festivities, giving it a prime-time slot

Friday night before a sellout crowd at Staples Center. While James provided most of the gasp-inducing highlights, Anthony scored 17 points.

Though sometimes sloppy and frequently one-sided, the game was fast-paced and thoroughly entertaining, with each player trying to outdo the last for 40 minutes. It was pure streetball — and even the All-Stars might have trouble matching it.

"I enjoyed the whole game — being in front of the crowd, putting on a show, the whole thing," Anthony said. "We'll see about what they can do on Sunday, but that was a show."

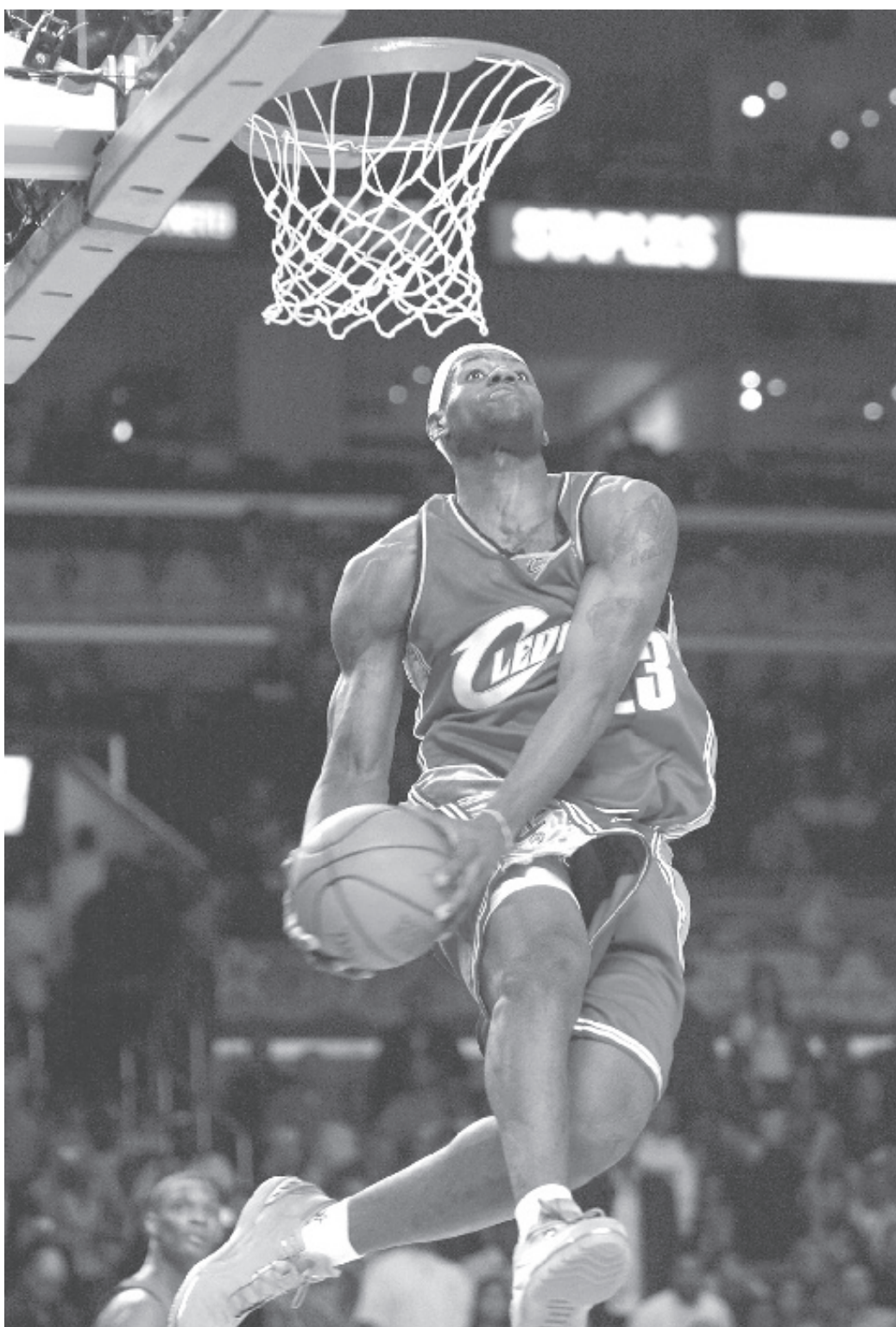
Stoudemire, last season's Rookie of the Year, made an incredible number of uncontested dunks. Carlos Boozer and Ronald Murray added 25 points apiece for the second-year pros, who made nearly 71 percent of their shots in the first half to turn it into a blowout.

"They're very exciting," Stoudemire said. "LeBron can get up in the air so high, and Carmelo has the all-around game. ... It's all about scoring out there, enjoying yourself and putting on a show."

James, wearing gold-colored shoes that wouldn't be legal during the regular season, gave a performance that steadily got better after losing the opening tip to Yao, who barely jumped to swat the ball away from the 6-foot-8 James.

Rookies coach Doug Collins used James and Anthony in tandem during the first half, substituting them together and taking advantage of their teamwork. They needed less than four minutes to hook up on a spectacular play.

Anthony got loose on a fast break and served up an under-



The rookie team's LeBron James, of the Cleveland Cavaliers, dunks against the sophomore team during the second half of the NBA Rookie Challenge, Friday, Feb. 13, 2004, in Los Angeles.

hand alley-oop to James, who slammed it home to delirious cheers. They teamed up again 2 1/2 minutes later, with Anthony throwing a longer pass for another emphatic slam by James.

Their third connection came with less than five minutes to play when Anthony dribbled under the hoop and tossed it up to James, who dunked from the other direction. They added one more in the final minute, when both teams abandoned any pretense of defense for an impromptu dunk contest.

James also threw down a two-handed behind-the-head slam in the final moments, and Anthony capped the game with a similar jam. After Stoudemire accepted his trophy, James tossed his new shoes into the crowd.

"We saw Carmelo and LeBron do some amazing things," Collins said. "This isn't one of my defensive tapes I'm going to send to anybody. ... At halftime, I said, 'At least let's not let them keep dunking.' I hope the fans enjoyed it."

James' favorite dunk came shortly after halftime, when he tossed a pass off the backboard to himself and rattled home a jam that had fans leaping from their seats.

"Everybody wanted to match my dunk off the glass tonight," James said. "I just go up and be creative. (Backboard passes) are not out of style at all."

Though the game was sold out on the opening night of All-Star festivities, about half the lower bowl was empty as fans fought rush-hour traffic to make it to the game. Shaquille O'Neal, Los Angeles native Baron Davis and rapper Jay-Z were among the celebrities who made it to the arena in time to see the showcase.

## Union to fight Celtics for waiving Baker

**BOSTON** (AP) — The Boston Celtics are on their way to getting rid of Vin Baker.

The Celtics requested waivers on Baker on Friday, a step toward releasing the former All-Star and saving the \$36 million they owe him over the next 2 1/2 seasons.

Baker's representatives insisted he could still come back, even after missing 10 games with a suspension for violating the terms of his alcohol rehab aftercare agreement.

Billy Hunter, the head of the National Basketball Players' Association, said Baker's contract is guaranteed and the union will fight any attempts at "subterfuge."

"Tell the Celtics we're coming after them," Hunter said. "We're immediately putting the Celtics and the league on notice that we'll file a grievance and do what we have to do. We're going to go all out on this."

The matter is likely to wind up in arbitration.

Baker was suspended indefinitely on Jan. 23 for violating a testing program he agreed to last season when he left the team to check into rehab. He missed his 10th consecutive game on Thursday night, triggering a clause in the agreement that gives the Celtics control over his future.

Boston could attempt to terminate his contract on Wednesday morning unless another team claims him — an exceedingly slim possibility. They could also allow him to languish on the suspended list — without pay — indefinitely.

Aaron Goodwin, Baker's agent, said his client has been ready to return and is only waiting for clearance from the doctor who is monitoring his care. "He'll continue to work out and continue to pass his tests," Goodwin said.

Celtics owner Wyc Grous-

beck declined comment. The team announced the move in a statement posted on its Web site that said there will be no further comment until the waiver process is complete.

Saving Baker's salary still wouldn't allow the Celtics to be a player on the free agent market, but it could keep them out of luxury tax range.

Baker missed two months and the playoffs last year after he checked into a Connecticut rehab center. He agreed at the time to a follow-up program this season that would involve frequent testing.

But Baker failed to comply with the terms of the agreement at least three times before being suspended indefinitely last month. The agreement dictated that only the doctor agreed to by both sides could determine when he's ready to return; after the suspension reached 10 games, that authority would transfer to the team.

## Richardson faces All-Star Dunk Challenge

By GREG BEACHAM  
AP SPORTS WRITER

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Fred Jones figures he has seen every slam dunk contest since the NBA revived the event in 1984. The Indiana guard is a dunking aficionado — and yet he wavered when asked to take on two-time champion Jason Richardson on Saturday.

"I said no at first," said Jones, who will participate in his first dunk contest during All-Star weekend. "I didn't know if I was ready to do it justice. I'm a basketball junkie. I know a lot about all the great champions in this event. I wanted to make sure I could measure up."

Jones also was looking forward to a weekend vacation from the NBA grind. His friends and family were looking for a break of their own, however: They persuaded Jones to enter the contest so they could get a free trip to Los Angeles.

Jones will join Golden State's

Richardson, Boston's Ricky Davis and Denver's Chris Andersen in a slimmed-down version of the event. LeBron James declined an invitation to participate.

Though Michael Jordan will always be Jones' favorite dunker, he ranks Richardson among the best in the event's history. Jones is particularly enamored with Richardson's signature dunk: leaping to catch a high bounce from the floor, then passing the ball between his legs for a one-handed slam.

"People don't understand how tough that is," Jones said. "I could maybe (make that dunk) in college, but I was lighter then. I've been lifting weights too much."

Andersen is unknown to most casual basketball fans, but the Nuggets' 6-foot-10 utility player has an athleticism that catches everybody's eye. He has a 34-inch vertical leap to go with his height — and he also has a healthy appreciation for

Richardson's work.

"I'm going to try to use some of his stuff against him," Andersen said. "He has a few favorite moves that I think I can put a spin on. I'm a one-footed jumper, and he's a two-footer. Maybe I can use that."

Though all three challengers are worthy, Richardson is the strong favorite to become the first three-time champion in the event's 19th edition (there was no competition in 1998 or 1999).

Earlier in the week, Richardson claimed he had no special plans or trick dunks for the contest — just more of the phenomenal slams that have been propelling Warriors fans out of their seats for three years.

"He's going to be tough to stop," said former Phoenix star Cedric Ceballos, who won the 1992 contest with his famed blindfold dunk. "J-Rich has some stuff that nobody has seen before. It's going to be fun to see what he comes up with."



# Cink leads Buick; Singh makes early exit

By DOUG FERGUSON  
AP GOLF WRITER

**SAN DIEGO** (AP)—With most of the focus on whether the biggest stars would make the cut, Stewart Cink kept making birdies and wound up with a 9-under 63 to take a two-shot lead Friday in the Buick Invitational.

Cink now faces two rounds on the South course at Torrey Pines, which already reminds him of a major championship, with plenty of players – including defending champion Tiger Woods – very much in the mix.

Vijay Singh isn't among them.

He headed for the airport, not the practice range, after missing three straight birdie putts from 15 feet to shoot 73 and miss the cut by one shot, an abrupt end to his streak of 12 consecutive top 10s.

"I'll probably start a streak next week," Singh said.

Phil Mickelson nearly joined him, although he only lives about 20 miles away. Mickelson, a three-time winner at the Buick Invitational, had to birdie the last two holes for a 69 to make the cut on the number at 1 under par.

Woods, who started with a spectacular 3-iron out of the trees that landed 2 feet from the cup, suddenly found himself around the cut line, too, after making three bogeys during a sloppy four-hole stretch on the easy North course.

He finished with five birdies on his final 11 holes for a 68, and was six shots behind Cink.

Woods narrowly made the cut in 1999 at Torrey Pines,



AP  
Stewart Cink, of Duluth, Ga., watches his tee shot on the par-3 third hole during the second round of the Buick Invitational Friday Feb. 13, 2004 in San Diego. Cink birdied the hole and shot a nine-under par 63 for the round for a two-day total of 11-under par.

shot 62-65 on the weekend and won by two. Mickelson is capable of a similar charge, so it should make for an interesting weekend.

And while Cink was at 11-under 133, his first 36-hole lead since the MCI Heritage last year, he'll be playing in the final group Saturday with Steve Flesch and a real crowd-pleaser: John Daly.

Daly, winless on the PGA Tour since the '95 British Open at St. Andrews, had a bogey-free 66 on the South - the best score of the week on the course that

will host the 2008 U.S. Open - and was two off the lead.

"He makes the game exciting," Flesch said.

Cink didn't draw much of a gallery – certainly not the crowd following Woods, Mickelson and Daly – but his golf was worth watching on a cool day along the cliffside course.

He kept hitting it within 12 feet, sometimes closer, until the par-5 18th. His chip from behind the green rolled down a ridge and almost off the green, resting against the fringe. He poured that one in for birdie, then covered his face

with a cap, knowing he'd gotten away with one.

"That was the hardest putt I faced all day – a two-putt, much less to knock it in," Cink said. "I stole one there. There's guys out here that steal things like that all the time, so I'm not going to be embarrassed about that."

Kevin Stadler, the 24-year-old son of former Masters champion Craig Stadler, had a 74 and was five shots behind.

Daly wasn't anything like his "Wild Thing" reputation, keeping the ball in play and showing his soft feel around the greens to keep bogey out of the picture. He left the course quickly, not sticking around to comment.

Daly has made plenty of news off the course.

Along with two trips to alcohol rehab, he felt his life was turning the corner when his son was born in July. A few days later, his wife and her parents were indicted on drug and illegal gambling charges.

Later in the year in Pennsylvania, Daly had to withdraw from the 84 Lumber Classic when he started hyperventilating in the 15th fairway. He was treated for dehydration.

Flesch played with him that day.

"He's just a regular guy," Flesch said. "He's got a heck of a lot of talent, and he's had some problems. I think the better he plays, the better he feels. And the better the tour is going to be with him out here."

Cink is feeling better about himself, too.

He ditched the traditional sports psychologist a few years

ago and worked on his overall state of mind, particularly the pressure he was putting on himself to do better. Cink considers himself an underachiever, and now tries to keep the stress and pressure to a minimum.

But there is plenty to get his attention on the weekend.

Nearly three dozen players were within six shots of the

lead, which is not much of a gap considering how much the South course can penalize errant shots of the tee.

"It's definitely reachable to win the tournament from there," Woods said of his position, only 20 guys ahead of him. "I don't have too many guys to pass. It's not too bad going over to the hardest golf course."

Tribune Sports Scores

NBA ROOKIE CHALLENGE BOX

ROOKIE TEAM (118)  
Anthony 8-19 0-0 17, James 15-26 0-0 33, Kaman 4-7 0-0 8, Hinrich 3-6 0-0 7, Wade 11-16 0-0 22, Bosh 4-7 0-0 8, Hayes 0-3 1-2 1, Haslem 3-5 3-6 9, Howard 6-10 1-2 13. Totals 54-99 5-10 118.

SOPHOMORE TEAM (142)  
Boozier 11-14 3-3 25, Stoudamire 17-23 2-4 36, Yao 3-4 0-0 6, Ginobili 2-5 0-0 4, Jaric 6-10 0-0 12, Nene 5-8 0-0 10, Murray 11-18 1-2 25, Prince 7-10 1-2 18, Dunleavy 3-6 0-0 6. Totals 65-98 7-11 142.

Rookies 59 59-118  
Sophomores 72 70-142

3-Point goals-Rookies - 5-21 (James 3-10 Anthony 1-4, Hinrich 1-4, Hayes 0-1, Howard 0-2), Sophomores - 5-17 (Prince 3-4, Murray 2-6, Stoudamire 0-1, Yao 0-1, Nene 0-1, Jaric 0-2, Dunleavy 0-2). Fouled out-None. Rebounds-Rookies 33 (Kaman 7), Sophomores 54 (Stoudamire 11). Assists-Rookies 28 (James, Hinrich 6 ), Sophomores 36 (Murray 10). Total fouls-Rookies 8, Sophomores 7. A-19,662.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

EAST  
Amherst 103, Connecticut Coll. 68  
Brockport 90, Potsdam 85  
Brown 91, Harvard 67  
Buffalo St. 79, Oneonta 65  
Concord 104, West Liberty 91  
Hamilton 86, Vassar 58  
Hunter 76, York, N.Y. 75, OT  
Ithaca 72, Alfred 61  
Lehigh 86, American U. 65  
Manhattan 88, Iona 69  
NYU 86, Carnegie-Mellon 77  
Nazareth, N.Y. 78, Utica 58  
Penn 91, Columbia 76  
Princeton 69, Cornell 64  
RPI 81, Hobart 68  
Rider 74, Marist 67  
Rochester 85, Brandeis 69  
Rochester Tech 77, Hartwick 64  
Rowan 84, Chestnut Hill 57  
Rutgers-Camden 90, Keystone 85  
Skidmore 67, Clarkson 61  
St. Lawrence 66, Union, N.Y. 61  
Tufts 78, Middlebury 66  
Wesleyan, Conn. 83, Trinity, Conn. 80  
Wheeling Jesuit 82, Bluefield St. 62  
Williams 86, Bates 83  
Yale 78, Dartmouth 40

SOUTH  
Belmont 69, Lipscomb 57  
Erskine 60, Barton 57  
Kentucky Christian 90, Free Will Baptist 67  
Palm Beach Atlantic 103, Voorhees 100  
South Florida 68, Southern Miss. 60  
W. Carolina 64, Appalachian St. 62

MIDWEST  
Bemidji St. 77, Minn.-Moorhead 57  
Buena Vista 77, Cent. Iowa 63  
Coll. of the Ozarks 85, York, Neb. 80  
DePauw 71, Hendrix 60  
Dickinson St. 107, Mayville St. 82  
Grace 80, Ozark Christian 69  
Loras 85, Upper Iowa 50

Martin Luther 78, St. Scholastica 66  
Minn.-Mankato 86, Nebraska-Omaha 74  
Minot St. 92, Valley City St. 83  
Nebraska-Kearney 96, Colorado Christian 84  
North Dakota 70, Augustana, S.D. 60  
Northern St., S.D. 85, Minn.-Crookston 60  
Northwestern, Minn. 70, Northland 56  
Rose-Hulman 73, Rhodes 50  
S. Dakota St. 88, N. Dakota St. 71  
South Dakota 91, St. Cloud St. 84  
Washington, Mo. 89, Case Reserve 82  
Winona St. 84, Southwest St., Minn. 73

SOUTHWEST  
Trinity, Texas 93, Sewanee 66

FAR WEST  
Montana St.-Northern 94, Montana Tech 58

SPORTS TRANSACTIONS

MLB  
OAKLAND ATHLETICS-Agreed to terms with RHP Chad Bradford on a one-year contract.  
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS-Agreed to terms with 3B Shea Hillenbrand on a one-year contract.  
CINCINNATI REDS-Agreed to terms with RHP Sean Bergman to a minor league contract.  
LOS ANGELES DODGERS-Named Frank McCourt chairman and Jamie McCourt vice chairman.  
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES-Agreed to terms with 2B Placido Polanco on a one-year contract.

NBA  
BOSTON CELTICS-Waived F Vin Baker.  
NEW YORK KNICKS-Signed G DerMarr Johnson.

NFL  
MIAMI DOLPHINS-Signed C William Delahoussaye.  
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS-Signed T Chris Ziemann.

COLLEGE  
AUBURN-Named Al Borges offensive coordinator.  
CASE WESTERN RESERVE-Announced the resignation of Joe Perrella, football coach.  
DUQUENSE-Signed Wade Jean, men's soccer coach, to a three-year contract extension.  
ILLINOIS-Named Dan Roushar offensive coordinator.  
MISSISSIPPI-Named Jay Hopson assistant coach and recruiting coordinator.  
PURDUE-Named Lou Anarumo defensive backs coach.  
RUTGERS-Suspended sophomore G Calvin Wooten from the men's basketball team for violation of team policy.  
ST. JOHNS, N.Y.-Reinstated basketball F Tyler Jones from suspension.  
TEXAS-Named Bobby Kennedy receivers coach. Promoted Mac McWhorter to assistant head coach, Michael Haywood to recruiting coordinator and Bruce Chambers to assistant recruiting coordinator.  
WALSH UNIVERSITY-Named Jeff Young men's basketball coach.

By The Associated Press

# Agassi outslugs Gambill at Siebel

**SAN JOSE, Calif.** (AP)—Andre Agassi outlasted fellow American Jan-Michael Gambill 7-6 (4), 7-5 in a sensational slugfest Friday night in the quarterfinals of the Siebel Open.

Both players held serve until Agassi broke in the final game of the match. The 33-year-old Agassi, seeded second and a five-time winner here, has beaten Gambill eight straight times dating to Scottsdale in 1999, when Agassi retired in the first set of their semifinal match with a right hamstring strain.

Gambill kept the world's No. 3 player off balance with his powerful serve-and-volley game, which led to many quick points on his serve. But Gambill had to go to deuce nine times to win his first three service games, including five deuces in the opening game of the match. The game lasted 16 minutes.

The players combined for 31 aces, 20 by Gambill, and 75 winners. Gambill hit 45 winners, converting 21 of his 27 chances at the net.

Agassi, who beat Gambill in the 2001 semifinals of this tournament, advances to the semifinal Saturday against either Mardy Fish or Hyung-Taik Lee, who played the late match Friday. The other semi features top-seeded Andy Roddick and wild-card entry Robert Kendrick.

Roddick beat Sweden's Joachim Johansson 6-3, 7-6 (7) earlier Friday.

Roddick pounded 27 aces to 14 for Johansson in the first meeting between the two 21-year-old big servers.

"It works," Roddick said of his serve. "I've been feeling good rhythm. I'm getting the kind of action I want."

After breezing through the first set in 25 minutes, Roddick had to battle to win the second. He jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the tiebreaker but couldn't hold it as he was forced to chase down hard groundstrokes in the corners. Roddick, ranked third in the world, improved to 10-2 this year.

He hit a 133-mph ace for a 5-2 edge in the tiebreaker, then

Johansson answered with a 130-mph ace to the corner and a 135-mph first serve that didn't come back.

Johansson went up 7-6 with a 137-mph ace before Roddick hit a 125-mph ace and went on to close out the match. The two were doubles partners as juniors for the French Open, where they reached the finals in 2000.

After he lost one point in the second set on a mis-hit, Roddick slammed his racket to the ground in frustration.

Kendrick tossed his white wristband one way and pounded a tennis ball into the upper decks in the other direction.

The 24-year-old Kendrick had reason to celebrate.

Kendrick has advanced to the semifinals of an ATP tournament for the second time in his career after a hard-fought 7-6 (6), 4-6, 6-3 win over Frenchman Cyril Saulnier.

"It was long, hopefully not boring," Kendrick said. "I'm very happy. It's another good week."

This has been an impressive run for Kendrick, who grew up

in Fresno, Calif., and often attended this tournament as a kid.

Kendrick pulled off the first upset of the tournament with a 6-4, 6-4 second-round win Wednesday over 23rd-ranked Taylor Dent, the tournament's fourth-seeded player. Kendrick beat 75th-ranked Lars Burgsmuller of Germany in straight sets in the first round.

Kendrick, ranked 139th in the world, hopes he soon will start to gain the same respect as young American stars Roddick, Dent, Fish, Robby Ginepri and James Blake.

"I hope so," Kendrick said. "It's up to everyone else what they think. I just have to do it on a consistent basis."

Kendrick did a little hop and clicked his heels together after the victory. He calls it the "The Heel Click," a sign to his friends in Florida where he trains.

He changed his shirt twice during the match and stayed focused when Saulnier challenged the line calls four different times. Kendrick also reached the semis at Delray Beach last year.



# The Week in Sports

## Practice makes perfect

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY MARK RABAGO  
REPORTER

The biggest news in sports last week came from bowling, as 18-year-old Jonathan Hensley managed to take the spotlight after rolling a perfect 300 last Tuesday.

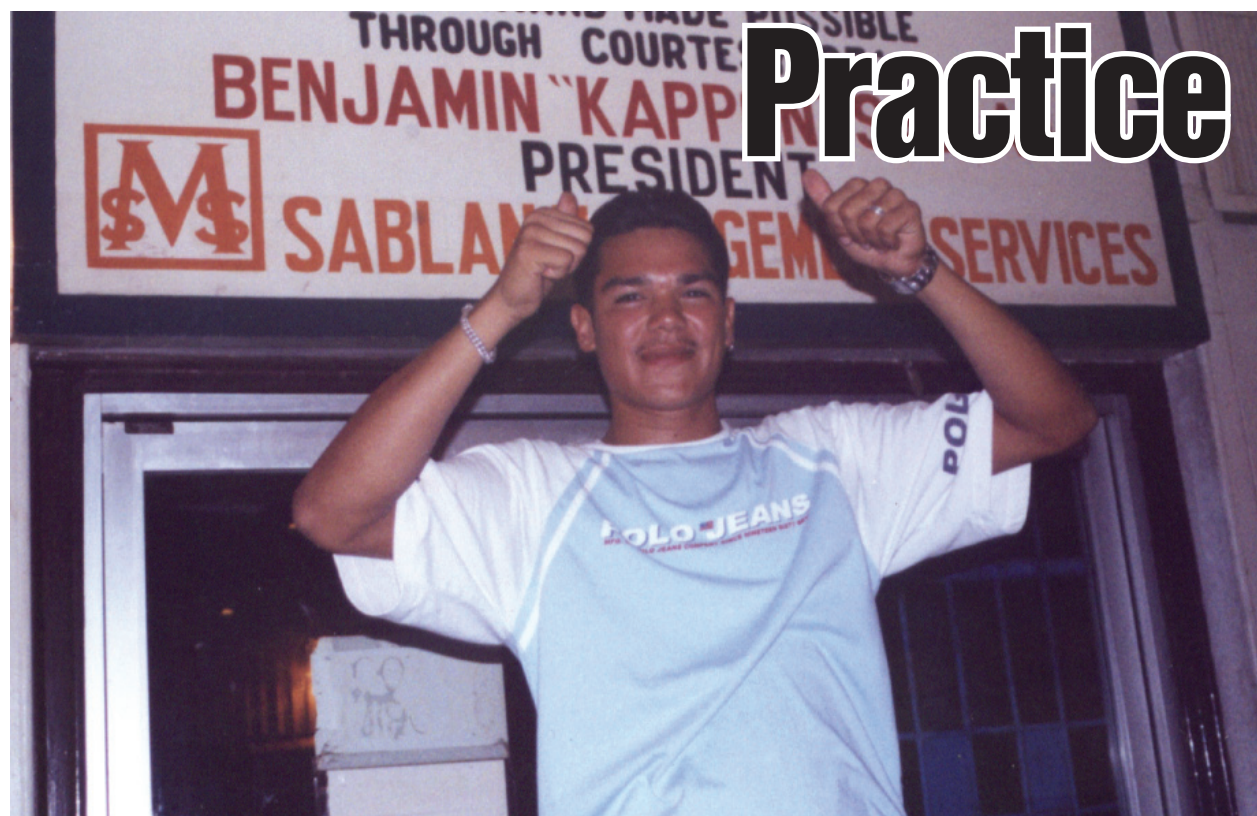
Hensley thus becomes the third bowler in the history of the Saipan Bowling Center to record 12 consecutive strikes en route to the perfect score.

The last person who rolled a 300 in the premises was Jaime Sasamoto, who achieved the feat nearly 22 years ago in March 19, 1982. Benny Pangelinan notched the first-ever perfect score on Saipan nine days earlier.

Hensley's accomplishment overshadowed the opening of the 2004 Saipan Little League on Sunday and the start of the 2nd Annual BANMI Budweiser Cup and the 4th Annual Mobil Oil Marianas Co-ed Invitational Basketball Tournament in Monday and Tuesday, respectively.

In other news, 2003 South Pacific Games bronze medalist Dirk Sharer landed in the top 6 percent of last Sunday's Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon held in the former crown colony.

The Saipan Swim Club also held its virtual meet last February 7 with FINA technical official Dennis Miller giving his fresh recruits their baptism of fire at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.



Jonathan Hensley puts two thumbs up while standing below the sign promising \$3,000 for anyone who could record a perfect game.



House Speaker Benigno Fital comes up against McDonald's Joe Ayuyu during the ceremonial pitch portion of the 2004 Little League opening ceremony last Sunday at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

Mayor Juan B. Tudela takes his turn at home plate.



An Ol'Aces player sits at first base during their Major Little League game against the Mariners last Sunday. Ol'Aces routed the Mariners 20-9.



A Sharks pitcher peeks at first base during their Big League game against the Pirates Sunday. The Sharks walloped the Pirates 11-1.



Saipan Swim Club technical officials got their baptism of fire last Saturday during a virtual swim meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

Gary Lashley of the Sun Devils gets ready to pass against the defense of Cougars' Felix Palacios. Cougars won the Budweiser Cup game 77-68.

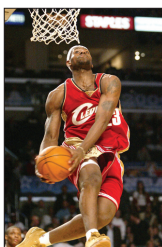


Budweiser Cup table officials and BANMI PIO Abner Venus pose for the camera at halftime last Monday. From left, Tanya Cabrera, Chariss Ruloked, Venus, and Beverly Igitol.



The 10 teams of the Mobil Oil Marianas Invitational Co-ed Basketball Tournament line up during the opening ceremonies last Tuesday. Inset: Shiho Kashiwagi of defending champion PDI scored 28 points in her team's 76-84 loss to Toyota on opening day.





## LeBron, Carmelo light up Rookie Challenge

Though the future seems limitless for LeBron James and Carmelo Anthony, the teenage friends realize they'll only get rare chances to play together.

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# Saipan Tribune Sports

## Practice makes perfect

The biggest news in sports last week came from bowling, as 18-year-old Jonathan Hensley managed to take the spotlight after rolling a perfect 300 last Tuesday.

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

# Stearns and McCullough finish second in RP race



Tony and Janet McCullough in action in the 5th Annual Philippine Hobie Challenge. Some of the participants whoop it up during a break on land, inset.

WWW.PHILHOBIE.COM

Tony Stearns and Janet McCullough sailed to a second place overall finish in the 5th Annual Philippine Hobie Challenge held from February 1 to 7 in the south central Philippines.

A total of 27 teams representing more than 10 countries sailed 16-foot Hobie catamarans more than 240 nautical miles from Boracay to Palawan. The top teams completed the five-day, island-to-island open-water course in just over 25 hours total elapsed sailing time. The slowest teams took more than 39 hours.

Stearns and McCullough finished in second place in the highly competitive international field, being beaten only by the three-person team of former Hobie 16 World Champion Aaron Worrall and fellow top Australian sailors Andrew Keage and Sean Siebold. Third place honors went to the reigning Dutch National Hobie Championships winners Peter Manvis and Weibe Shuitema.

The seven-day long Philippine Hobie Challenge consists of two separate sailing events. The title event is a five-day point-to-point race sailed to island over long and isolated stretches of open sea. The second component of the regatta is a typical around-the-buoys set of races, called inshore races. The sailboats were all 16-foot long Hobie catamarans sailed by a crew of two, although some teams had a third team member alternating on the boat. Stearns and McCullough finished second in the long-distance part of the race and third in the in-shore series.

The long distance event is similar to a bicycle stage race or a car rally. Teams are equipped with a set of nautical charts, GPS units, and compasses for navigation. Each team is required to carry VHS radios, flares, flashlights, water, and other emergency equipment.

Daily passages varied between 25 and 75 nautical miles in length and took between four and 13 hours to compete.

Required waypoints were established at various intervals along the course, although often 30 to 40 miles apart, in order to bring the fleet of Hobie cats back together periodically for safety. On two days the teams sailed well past sunset and into the full moonlit night.

Each day's racing began at 8am, and teams were limited in the course they sailed from the start to the finish only by the periodic waypoints. Otherwise the teams were free to choose which side of islands to pass by and which course to sail depending on where they thought the best conditions were that would take them to the finish in the shortest amount of time.

Each team is timed in each days race, and at the end of the five days the team with the lowest aggregate time is the winner.

The 27 Hobie teams were accompanied by numerous support boats carrying race officials, a kitchen crew, food, camping gear, spare boat parts, a medical team, other support personnel and members of the media. Each

night the entire entourage camped on a different island, mostly small, isolated and deserted. The last night's camping was spent on Calauit Island, famous for more than 500 African animals, including zebras, giraffes, and antelope, that run wild on the island.

Sailing conditions varied from 20 to 25 knot winds and eight to 10-foot swells in the early part of the race to virtually no wind during much of the last two days. Top speeds on the windy days exceeded 23 knots. Almost all the boats capsized at least one time, and there were numerous dis-

mastings, delaminated hulls, and other major equipment problems. However, the rescue boats were able to retrieve all disabled boats without major incident, and the repair crew frequently worked late into the night in order to get the boats repaired and ready to go for the next morning's start.

The first three days of the long-distance course had heavy winds with large swells and waves. The top teams sailed the first 160 nautical miles in less than 15 hours, at times reaching speeds of well over 15 knots for two to three hours at a stretch and top speeds well over 20 knots. Stearns and McCullough sailed well throughout the regatta, and were in fourth place at the end of day three. The fourth day had very light and variable winds with numerous islands and passages to choose from over the 50-mile length of the day's course. Stearns and McCullough were in the first place at the midway point, but fell back to 13th place for the day at the finish, more than 10 hours after the start. The course had been shortened due to dropping winds, and the boats were towed or sailed onward another two or three hours in the dark to the campsite for the night.

On the fifth, final and shortest day of the long-distance race the winds were very light and variable, with the teams sailing initially upwind against a strong current. Starting out the day in sixth place overall, more than an hour behind the leading Aussies and 20 minutes behind the second and third place teams, any chance of placing in the top three seemed nearly impossible. However, Stearns and McCullough had a great start and jumped out to an early lead, reaching each checkpoint with an

ever-increasing lead over all the competitors. While looking for wind and the best course to follow, the teams were treated to a numerous humpback whale and orca sightings, with many surfacing as close as 20-feet from the boats.

As the winds continued to drop, Stearns and McCullough pulled away from the entire fleet, with only the Australian team staying anywhere close. After more than six hours sailing and only 18 miles covered for the leaders, the teams learned that the race had been called back at the last checkpoint. Some teams were nearly three hours and 10 miles behind the leaders, and the winds were virtually nonexistent. Stearns and McCullough had won the leg handily, becoming the only team besides the Australians to win a day's leg. They had been so far ahead at the final checkpoint that they jumped from sixth to second place in the overall standings in the long-distance race, being bested only by the Australian team.

The Hobie teams were all towed the last few miles to the finish point on Paradise Island in Busuanga, northern Palawan. The following day the final three races of the inshore series were cancelled due to extremely low winds, and Stearns and McCullough held onto their third place standing from the inshore races at Boracay. The team finished the regatta with a second place standing in the long distance event and third place in the in-shore series. The next Philippine Hobie Challenge, set to sail from Cebu to Bohol, then down the east coast of Mindanao, is scheduled for early February 2005.

